

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5056
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 0193

SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PDIP, PFOR, NO
SUBJECT: VISIT TO NORWAY OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZIMSKOV

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE JANUARY 3-6 VISIT TO OSLO OF SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZIMSKOV HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY MFA OFFICIALS AS UNUSUALLY CORDIAL. THE MEETING, WHICH WAS INTENDED TO IMPROVE THE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR, DID NOT ENCOMPASS THE NEGOTIATIONS OF ANY SPECIFICS. THERE WERE NO CONCRETE RESULTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING. THE TWO SIDES AIRED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEMSELVES, BUT ZIMSKOV CONSISTENTLY BROKE OFF SUCH DISCUSSIONS SO AS TO AVOID CONFRONTATION. THE SOVIETS PROPOSED A CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT, URGED NORWAY TO DEAL WITH ALL NORTHERN ISSUES IN ONE PACKAGE AND MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO.

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THE GON PARTICIPANTS HEARD OUT THE SOVIET OFFICIAL, EXPRESSED LACK OF INTEREST IN A CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT AND URGED THE USSR TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON ITS PART REGARDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE VISIT WERE ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, INCLUDING THE UN, NEW ECONOMIC

ORDER, MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA. MFA OFFICIALS SAID THAT WHILE ZIMSKOV WAS AMIABLE, HE SHOWED NO GREAT INTEREST IN ANY OF THESE ITEMS. ZIMSKOV DID MANIFEST SOME INTEREST IN THE SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT. ON THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, MFA OFFICIALS SAID THAT ZIMSKOV TOOK A MORE OPTIMISTIC VIEW THAN THEY HAD ANTICIPATED. ZIMSKOV, HOWEVER, INDICATED THAT THE SOVIET DELEGATION CHIEF WILL BE RETURNING TO HIS REGULAR POST, A MOVE WHICH MFA OFFICIALS INTERPRETED AS MEANING THAT THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY GO NO FURTHER ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES IN BELGRADE.

3. IN DISCUSSING RELATIONS WITH THE US, ZIMSKOV EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE SALT TALKS AND THE GENERAL TONE OF SOVIET/US RELATIONS. HE DID, HOWEVER, VOICE THE USUAL SOVIET CONCERN AND ADMONITIONS ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB.

4. THE LAST PORTION OF THE VISIT WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF BILATERAL ISSUES. ZIMSKOV RAISED THE NUMEROUS DIFFERENCES EXISTENT BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR (SVALBARD, BASE POLICY, MANEUVERS, NORWAY'S NATO MEMBERSHIP, THE BOUNDARY), BUT IN EACH INSTANCE, STOPPED SHORT OF CONFRONTATION, STATING THAT EACH SIDE'S POSITION WAS WELL KNOWN TO THE OTHER AND THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN ARGUING ABOUT SUCH MATTERS.

5. ZIMSKOV REFLOATED THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT AS WELL AS THE LONG-STANDING SOVIET PROPOSAL TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE NORWAY AND THE USSR DEAL BILATERALLY WITH ALL NORTHERN ISSUES IN ONE PACKAGE. HE ALSO HELD OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO LINKING IT TO THE CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT BY NOTING THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER COULD NOT VISIT NORWAY WITHOUT ACHIEVING SOMETHING CONCRETE. HE PROPOSED NO SPECIFIC DATES FOR SUCH A VISIT, HOWEVER. THE GON EXPRESSED A LACK OF INTEREST IN THE CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT AND THE NORTHERN PACKAGE APPROACH. THE NORWEGIANS ANSWERED THAT THEY WOULD WELCOME SUCH A VISIT AS A MEANS OF FOSTERING A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THOUGH NO DATE WAS MENTIONED BY THE NORWEGIANS EITHER. NOTE: THE INVITATION WAS FIRST EXTENDED BY THE GON TWELVE YEARS AGO.

6. IN REGARD TO THE BOUNDARY TALKS, ZIMSKOV INDICATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BE HOST FOR THE NEXT MEETING. A NEW NORTHERN AREA TASK FORCE THAT HAS JUST BEEN FORMED IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF AMBASSADOR VINDENES WILL HANDLE THE TALKS FOR THE GON. MINISTRY OFFICIALS SEE VERY LITTLE CHANCE OF A SOVIET CHANGE OF POSITION REGARDING THE BOUNDARY LINE (OR FOR THAT MATTER, ON SOVIET ATTITUDES REGARDING SVALBARD).

7. ZIMSKOV, WHO, IN THE PAST, HAS DESCRIBED THE NORWEGIAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 0193
PRESS AS THE WORST IN THE WEST, AGAIN HAD SOME HARD WORDS FOR
THE LOCAL JOURNALIST. AFTER A DINNER ON THE FIRST NIGHT
OF HIS VISIT, ZIMSKOV FOLLOWED HIS SPEECH WITH AN ATTACK ON
THE LOCAL PRESS. ON LEAVING NORWAY, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET
OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE HADN'T EXPECTED SO MUCH INTEREST IN
HIS VISIT OR SUCH BALANCED PRESS COVERAGE.

8. THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, ZIMSKOV STRESSED THE NEED FOR NORWAY
TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE BETTER RELATIONS WITH
THE USSR. WHEN, NEAR THE END OF THE VISIT, STATE SECRETARY
STOLTENBERG, AT THE URGING OF WORKING LEVEL MFA OFFICIALS,
POINTED OUT THE NEED FOR RECIPROCAL FLEXIBILITY BY THE SOVIETS
ON SUCH MATTERS AS THE BOUNDARY, SVALBARD ADMINISTRATION
AND THE SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE, ZIMSKOV CLEARLY
APPEARED TO BE ANGERED.

9. MFA OFFICIALS REGARD THE UNUSUALLY CIVIL TONE OF THE
ZIMSKOV VISIT AS A PLANNED COUNTERPOINT TO THE KOSYGIN TIRADE
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IN HELSINKI. THEY BELIEVE THAT, IN EACH INSTANCE, THE SOVIETS INTENDED TO KEEP THE GON ON THE DEFENSIVE. THEY DID, HOWEVER, VIEW THE RELATIVELY FRIENDLY VISIT OF ZIMSKOV AS USEFUL IN IMPROVING THE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND, AS SUCH, POSSIBLY HELPFUL, IN SO FAR AS IT CREATES A BETTER CLIMATE IN WHICH TO NEGOTIATE SPECIFICS SUCH AS THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY.

10. COMMENT: WHILE THE GON HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OR OBJECTIVES OF ITS SUPERPOWER NEIGHBOR, THE UNACCUSTOMED CIVILITY OF ZIMSKOV WAS NOT WITHOUT EFFECT. THE GON PERCEIVES AS PRESSING THE NEED TO ACHIEVE SETTLEMENT OF SOME OF THEIR OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES WITH THE USSR, PARTICULARLY THE SHELF BOUNDARY. MOST MFA OFFICIALS REJECT OUT OF HAND THE "NORTHERN PACKAGE" PROPOSAL. THERE ARE ALSO MISGIVINGS, ALTHOUGH LESS SERIOUS IN SOME QUARTERS, ABOUT THE CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT PROPOSAL. THE GROMYKO VISIT, HOWEVER, APPEALS TO A GREAT MANY MFA OFFICIALS. THEY SEE IT AS A CHANCE TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND CONSEQUENTLY TO EASE TENSIONS. THE GON AFTER WAITING OVER A DECADE FOR A RESPONSE TO THEIR INVITATION, MAY, UNFORTUNATELY, REGARD SUCH A VISIT AS A CONCESSION BY THE USSR, FOR WHICH THE GON SHOULD OFFER SOME CORRESPONDING CONCESSION, SUCH AS AGREEING TO A CONSULTATIVE AGREEMENT.
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